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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000715

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/05/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [HA](#)  
SUBJECT: PM ALEXIS SAFE FOR NOW

REF: A. PAP 609  
[1](#)B. 06 PAP 2387  
[1](#)C. PAP 577

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Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Following President Preval's intervention with legislators on Prime Minister Jacques Edward Alexis' behalf and an intense round of discussions among Haitian political leaders during the first week of April, parliamentary leaders are voicing their support for stability and have dropped efforts to remove the PM by a vote of no confidence. The PM on April 12 told the Ambassador that he had Preval's full support and felt secure in his position, the government planned to replace some ministers, the presidents of the senate and chamber of deputies separately confirmed to the Ambassador that majorities in both houses believed that stability in the executive at present was more important than removing the PM. President Preval was slow off the mark in stepping in to defend his PM, but once he made his position clear the movement against Alexis appeared to quickly crumble. End Summary.

PM Feeling Secure

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[1](#)2. (C) The PM on April 12 discussed his standing with the Ambassador on the margins of a reception at her residence. The PM related that he met earlier in the week with President Preval, who had reaffirmed his support, and was also pleased with Preval's previous direct intervention with key parliamentarians (reftel A). The PM, in a decidedly upbeat mood, felt there was no immediate danger of a vote of no confidence in either house. He acknowledged, however, that some parliamentary criticism was warranted and that the government was considering the replacement of a limited number of ministers to improve the cabinet's performance. He also admitted that the government had been ineffective in communicating its accomplishments to the public, and that he himself had made mistakes in dealing with the parliament. He was looking to hire a spokesperson to help him in that regard.

Stability First, Lambert Asserts

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¶3. (SBU) Senate President Joseph Lambert, in an April 11 meeting with the Ambassador and three other senators in his office, stated that stability within the GoH was his first priority, and that the rest of the parliament will also eventually take the same position. He presumed that this was also the view of the international community. Lambert weighed the following events in assessing the government's performance: the pledging conference in July 2006; the presentation and publication of the budget in September 2006; and the government's reaction to gang activity and subsequent improvement in security in early 2007. These were significant steps, and parliament must allow the government to build on these accomplishments. However, a cabinet-level shuffle and/or summons of the PM to account for government performance before parliament are not out of the question.

PM is Safe, Jean Jacques confirms  
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¶4. (SBU) Chamber of Deputies President Eric-Pierre Jean Jacques reaffirmed to the Ambassador on April 13 that PM Alexis was safe. In a meeting at her residence, he recounted that the lower house's dissatisfaction with the Prime Minister had "heated up" over the past weeks, but that a majority now recognized the need to preserve the "momentum" from which the country currently benefits. He reminded the Ambassador that the chamber is inexperienced, but demonstrating more responsibility as its term progresses. Jean Jacques added to the criticism, however, of the communication between the PM's office and the legislature. Despite the initiative the PM took in creating a minister for parliamentary relations, communication between the two institutions has been nonexistent.

¶5. (SBU) The Ambassador asked Jean Jacques whether the government's reported halt of paying bribes to legislators

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contributed to parliament's dissatisfaction with the Prime Minister. Jean Jacques readily agreed this was the case, stating that it will be hard for some to accept that politics in Haiti are changing. To facilitate this "divorce from politics as usual," Jean Jacques opined, the USG should include the deputies in their development programs, building police commissariats and schools via coordination with the deputies.

¶6. (SBU) Party leaders from the OPL (Struggling Peoples' Party) met with Ambassador on April 11 to discuss the political situation. According to OPL Deputy Director (and former Presidential candidate) Paul Denis, the OPL understands the need for stable institutions in Haiti and did not want to create a situation that could easily spiral out of control. While the OPL disapproved of Alexis, it was not pushing for a vote of no confidence and amenable to "compromise" with the government to ease the strains between Alexis and the parliament. Nonetheless, Denis offered sharp criticism of Alexis. The PM has failed in his task to unite the government. He has proposed no solutions to Haiti's myriad problems, nor has he facilitated coordination amongst the different government ministries.

Comment  
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¶7. (C) The movement against Alexis in parliament first came to a head in November-December, 2006, when public dissatisfaction with the government's response to kidnapping and other gang activity reached its peak. At the time (as reported in refTel B) Preval weighed in early on Alexis' behalf, and the lack of a clear alternative as PM eventually quelled serious thought of a vote of no confidence. Since then, with the government (and MINUSTAH) boasting significant accomplishments regarding security, anti-Alexis sentiment has re-emerged focused on Alexis' own perceived poor performance and his failure to communicate with the parliament and the public at large. While some of that sentiment reflects

parochial self-interest of various parliamentarians, the constant refrain regarding Alexis' arrogance and his failure to communicate reflects legitimate concerns regarding his leadership, and Preval may well have thought seriously before again intervening to save his PM. Fortunately, having approached the brink of a vote of no confidence against Alexis, Preval and Haiti's political leaders appear to have recognized that removing Alexis at this point, with no ready alternative at hand, would have created more problems than it solved. We hope that Alexis' comments to the Ambassador were sincere and that he has drawn lessons from this episode and resolves to constructively respond to his critics.

SANDERSON